

# NAVAL POSTGRADUATE SCHOOL

## Monterey, California



## THESIS

**RUSSIAN INFLUENCE ON NATO MEMBER/NON-MEMBER RELATIONSHIPS: A CASE STUDY OF THE US-UKRAINE MILITARY TO MILITARY RELATIONSHIP**

by

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December 2002

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RELATIONSHIPS: A CASE STUDY OF THE US-UKRAINE MILITARY TO  
MILITARY RELATIONSHIP**

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## **I. INTRODUCTION**

### **A. RUSSIAN INFLUENCE ON US-UKRAINIAN RELATIONS**

Over the last several years of US-Ukrainian relations, many exercises and contact programs have been undertaken by the armed forces of both nations. The United States and Ukraine have been involved in a robust military-to-military contact program as an outgrowth of the Cooperative Threat Reduction program instituted in 1992. This bilateral military-to-military program has served both nations well. From a US policy perspective, the primary purpose of these contacts has been the engagement of Ukraine and its armed forces and the enhancement of democratization through this engagement. The dynamic of Russian influence on the relationship between the United States and Ukraine is the issue facing this thesis. This dynamic is part of the larger issue of Russia's relationship with the North Atlantic Treaty Organization (NATO) and Russia's views on NATO enlargement and engagement.

Ukraine is a key component in the US Eastern European area of interest. Its geographically strategic position enhances its relative interest to the United States. It is a highly pivotal state in Eastern Europe and as a former Soviet republic it holds a historically significant position in the post-Cold War environment. Moreover, Ukraine is viewed as a regional leader, with significant emphasis on its ability to continue to foster hope for democratization within the region. These factors are testimony of the importance of US-Ukrainian relations. The military-to-military relationship serves as a metric in measuring the efficaciousness of the overall bilateral relationship.

Ukraine is a state with a population of almost forty nine million inhabitants. It has a land mass roughly the size of France, just slightly smaller than the state of Texas. It is richly endowed with natural resources and has a large agricultural capacity. It has a northern border with Russia of over 1,500 kilometers and also borders Belarus, Hungary, Moldova, Poland, Romania and Slovakia.<sup>1</sup> This only underscores the importance of Ukraine as a regional stability partner in the post-Soviet world. Its strategic significance

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<sup>1</sup> *The CIA World Factbook* [database on-line] (Washington, DC: 2001, accessed 10 October 2001) available from <http://www.odci.gov/cia/publications/factbook/geos/up.html>; Internet

is no longer tied to nuclear weapons, since Ukraine's decision in the early 1990s to disarm itself of all nuclear weapons. Its strategic significance is based on its geography, its natural resources and its political significance as the second largest former Soviet republic, second only to Russia itself. These factors are significant not just to the United States, but to Russia as well. Ukraine is a pivotal state in what the Russians refer to as their "near abroad." This is an especially important region of the former Soviet republics and "to many Russians it is seen as indivisible from Russia itself."<sup>2</sup> Ukraine's significance on the world stage is only magnified because of its proximity and historical ties to Russia. This provides for a unique and tenuous set of three separate bilateral relationships between Russia and Ukraine, the United States and Ukraine, and the United States and Russia, all of which will be examined in this thesis.

The hypothesis of this work is that Russia influences the relationship between the United States and Ukraine, and that this influence is directed at pulling Ukraine away from NATO and the United States. Moreover, Russia's motivation is focused on two basic dynamics, decreasing US/NATO influence in its Near Abroad and stemming NATO expansion. This thesis will examine whether the actions of Russia are a form of containment strategy, designed to prevent further NATO enlargement and thwart NATO engagement with Ukraine. A corollary to the central hypothesis is that Russia's influence on US-Ukrainian relations is motivated by an effort to make Ukraine more dependent upon Russia, and thus decrease the influence of the United States in the region. This objective reflects the fact that Russia views the post-Soviet world with a realist, power-based approach. Furthermore, studying how and why Russia influences a NATO bilateral relationship may provide some insight into the motivation for that influence, as well as providing some recommendations to minimize or counterbalance this effect. This thesis will attempt to draw some correlation between this specific case of influence and other potential or actual cases wherein Russia attempts to influence or manipulate NATO member/non-member relations. This is especially significant with regard to the military-to-military contact programs.

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<sup>2</sup> Wynne Russell, "Russian Relations with the 'Near Abroad'", Peter Shearman, ed., *Russian Foreign Policy Since 1990*, (Boulder: Westview Press, 1995), 53.



The manner in which Russia influences the United States-Ukrainian military-to-military program is best illustrated by examining an incident related to EXERCISE PEACESHIELD 2000, the fifth annual exercise in this series. PEACESHIELD is a NATO In-the-Spirit-Of Partnership for Peace (ISO-PfP) series of exercises designed as part of the United States-Ukraine military-to-military program. In December 1999, at the initial planning conference for PEACESHIELD 2000, the US planners proposed an actual combined airborne operation as part of the exercise.<sup>3</sup> Both US and Ukrainian military planners began to develop this concept into a realistic exercise component. When Russia, along with twenty-odd other countries, was asked to participate in the exercise, they strongly objected to any US airborne operations in Ukraine. Their objections were based upon the premise that Ukraine was sovereign territory and the airborne jump by US forces was viewed as a power projection demonstration on the part of NATO and the United States.<sup>4</sup> Moreover, senior Russian military officers cautioned Ukraine that this alignment with Western forces could seriously affect Ukrainian-Russian relations. For several months Russia objected to the upcoming exercise at Ukrainian-Russian meetings, including high-level Ukrainian-Russian strategic talks.<sup>5</sup> Russia's threats were linked to military weapons buy-back programs, energy discussions and general military-to-military exercise issues as well.

Ukraine, determined to show its autonomy, continued on its course and the exercise was conducted in July 2000, with the airborne jump as the focal point of the exercise. Russia was conspicuous by its absence at both the exercise and the airborne jump. Twenty-one other nations did participate and Ukraine and the United States, as well as NATO and all the participating nations, saw the exercise as a huge success. The significant lesson learned from PEACESHIELD 2000 was not that Russia would attempt to influence US-Ukrainian relations, but rather, that Russia was attempting to further a policy of isolation and exclusion with NATO as well. Russia's stated opposition was founded in its perception of NATO "combat type" operations in its near abroad, yet its

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<sup>3</sup> Lieutenant Colonel Joseph D. Righello, PEACESHIELD 2000 planning conference notes, Yavoriv, Ukraine, December 1999.

<sup>4</sup> Lieutenant Colonel Timothy Shea, US Army Attaché to Ukraine, interview by author, written notes, Washington D.C., 27 September 2001.

<sup>5</sup> Colonel Andrii Taran, Ukrainian Defense Attaché, interview by author, written notes, Washington

application of threats and influence were directed at bilateral issues between Russia and Ukraine. This observation is the impetus for this thesis and is the underlying foundation of the interest in the research.

## **B. KEY QUESTIONS TO ANSWER**

This thesis proposes to analyze the influence that Russia attempts to exert on the US-Ukrainian relationship. It seeks to answer the following questions:

- How does Russia influence the US-Ukrainian relationship?
- Why does Russia influence the US-Ukrainian relationship?
- Why is this influence dynamic important or relevant?
- What policy outcomes and recommendations may result from the realization and study of this influence?

## **C. METHODOLOGY**

The methodology for this thesis will be a qualitative analysis of topical scholarly texts, government policy, personal interviews and electronic and print media. This thesis will focus on the political and diplomatic-military factors affecting the three aforementioned bilateral relationships.

Chapter two will examine Russian policy towards NATO in general and the specifics of NATO enlargement. It will study NATO's changing strategy from collective defense to collective security or cooperative security. This is important in the context of NATO's interests and policy regarding enlargement. It will also examine Russia's policy and reaction to NATO enlargement. It will conclude with a review of engagement programs including the Partnership for Peace (PfP) and State Partnership Program (SPP) and their relevance to the Russian-NATO relationship.

Chapter three will provide an overview of US-Ukrainian bilateral relations. It will examine the specific US-Ukrainian military-to-military relationship and then focus in on the specific examples of Russian influence on that relationship. This part of the thesis explores the motives for Russian influence and the dynamics that exist as a result of NATO enlargement and Russia's choices vis-à-vis that path.

Chapter four will analyze the various points developed in chapters two and three, specifically, Russian motivations as well as an analysis of both Ukrainian and US responses to the Russian influence. It will further develop and analyze the impact of this influence on US-Ukrainian relations, Russian-Ukrainian relations and Russian-US relations. This chapter will analyze the behavior of each of the actors individually, and then provide a synergistic analysis of the impact on the three sets of bilateral relationships being studied.

Chapter five will assess the information and analyses performed by the thesis and then make recommendations as to potential policy outcomes that will benefit or improve US relations with both Russia and Ukraine. In the research, there was significant evidence of an overt and determined attempt on the part of Russia to influence the US-Ukraine relationship. The evidence clearly identifies Russia's objections to US/NATO exercises in Ukraine as well as the Russian rhetoric regarding US/NATO activities in Ukraine. This points to a desire on the part of Russia to decrease the overall influence of the West in the Near Abroad and to stem the enlargement of NATO. Because of these findings, the basic recommendations for policy development revolve around continued engagement with Ukraine by the United States and NATO and continued security cooperation dialogue with Russia. Finding common ground for US-Russian cooperation, especially post-September 11<sup>th</sup>, is essential. The essence of this policy recommendation is to focus away from collective defense and truly develop collective security cooperation. Reliance on the State Partnership Program as a core element of this strategy is central to the policy recommendations of this thesis.

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## **II. RUSSIA AND NATO**

### **A. NATO'S CHANGING STRATEGY**

#### **1. Overview**

This chapter will focus on Russia's objections in recent years to NATO enlargement. It will look at the changing strategy of NATO vis-à-vis Russia's perceptions of that strategy. NATO began as a Cold War alliance to defend against aggression and the specific threat of the Soviet Union. So long as Russia views itself as the hereditary heir of the former Soviet Union, it will view NATO in the very least as a potential threat to Russia's security interests. Russia's opposition to NATO enlargement is fundamentally centered in its view that power and influence are a zero sum game, so that as NATO's influence increases, Russia's must decrease and vice versa. Russia does not see NATO enlargement as a stability factor in European security because it views NATO as an adversarial entity, not a security stability apparatus. This view will be further examined in the conclusion of this thesis, but it is presented here to understand the context of the Russian-NATO relationship.

#### **2. Collective Defense**

The North Atlantic Treaty Organization (NATO) was originally designed as a collective defense entity. The North Atlantic Treaty, sometimes called the Washington Treaty, of 1949, envisioned an alliance of North Atlantic states allied against the Soviet Union. This was a classic example of a collection of states defending together against an external threat. This alliance was not just a collective defense pact, but was interested in "pursuing positive political changes in Europe while avoiding war (with the Soviet Union)."<sup>6</sup> The Alliance was thus seen as having two purposes. First, "to maintain sufficient military strength to deter aggression...to defend the allies in the event of aggression and to assure the balance of forces, thereby creating a climate of stability,

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<sup>6</sup>David S. Yost, *NATO Transformed: The Alliance's New Roles in International Security*, (Washington: United States Institute of Peace, 1998), 35.

security and confidence.”<sup>7</sup> This premise was the guiding force throughout the Cold War and helped to create the foundation for the second purpose of the Alliance, “to pursue the search for progress towards a more stable relationship in which the underlying political issues can be solved.”<sup>8</sup> The Alliance prepared for war by building a strong conventional and nuclear capability, while at the same time seeking political and diplomatic opportunities to ensure stability and security in the North Atlantic region. This two-pronged approach can be viewed as the first example of the blending of collective defense with other elements of collective security.

The best example of collective defense language is contained in Article 5 of the Washington Treaty which essentially can be paraphrased as “an attack against any one state is an attack against all states” within the Alliance. This concept was vital to the Alliance and was instrumental in forming a very strong and unified collective defense entity. Collective defense against the perceived or actual threat of aggression by the Soviet Union was the paramount reason for the Alliance and served it well for the duration of the Cold War. However, after the fall of the Soviet Union, collective defense, albeit still a primary concern for the Alliance, became a much more ambiguous concept. Since there was no longer a Soviet Union, and Russia was not the instant successor opponent, the object of the collective defense for the Alliance has been illusive.

In April 1999, the Alliance published a new strategic concept. In this document, it spells out the necessity for collective defense in Paragraph 4, saying, “it must maintain collective defence and reinforce the transatlantic link and ensure a balance that allows the European Allies to assume greater responsibilities.”<sup>9</sup> It goes on to enumerate NATO’s essential and enduring purpose as set out in the Washington Treaty, “to safeguard the freedom and security of all its members by political and military means.”<sup>10</sup> This clearly outlines NATO’s commitment to collective defense and the indivisibility of its members in the pursuit of this common goal. However, it is not apparent just whom the Alliance is collectively defending against. It is clear that the Alliance is interested in defending

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<sup>7</sup> Ibid.

<sup>8</sup> Ibid.

<sup>9</sup> North Atlantic Council, The Alliance’s Strategic Concept, paragraph 4, 24 April 1999.

<sup>10</sup> Ibid., paragraph 6.

against an outside threat and there appears to be little regional collective defense threat for NATO. However, groups such as al Qaeda portend a different interest.

### **3. Collective Security**

Collective security is another point for consideration with regard to the roles and missions of NATO. Collective security can be viewed broadly as “an arrangement involving multilateral intervention by a group of nations directed against international aggression or internal conflict that threatens the general peace and stability of a state or region.”<sup>11</sup> The idea of indivisibility of security is at the forefront of this broad view. The Alliance’s Strategic Concept states “the fundamental guiding principle by which the Alliance works is that of common commitment and mutual cooperation among sovereign states in support of the indivisibility of security for all of its members.”<sup>12</sup> Here, the Alliance appears to be focusing on the indivisibility of security, not necessarily on the issue of common defense. This concept of collective security, the idea that security is indivisible, can be traced back to the League of Nations. As Woodrow Wilson envisioned, all the states in that state system would “be united in a cooperative pact and all states would be obliged to act against any aggressor, because ‘peace is indivisible’ and every state’s security interests are believed to be affected by any aggression anywhere.”<sup>13</sup>

This idea of collective security, specifically for the Alliance, is timely. NATO is concerned politically and militarily with preserving peace and stability in what has become known as the Euro-Atlantic region. Regional security is not necessarily a deviation from the Wilsonian or Kantian ideas of collective security. Sharing the responsibility for ensuring peace and stability regionally, even with the idea of acting globally, is not necessarily outside the scope of collective security. The concept of ensuring international security is at the heart of collective security and therefore is consistent with the collective security premise. This brings us then to the point of NATO’s interest in collective security, and how that is viewed by Russia.

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<sup>11</sup> Andrew J. Moyer, “Prospects for NATO Enlargement: Examining the ‘Big Bang’ Approach” (Masters thesis, Naval Postgraduate School, 2000), 14.

<sup>12</sup> North Atlantic Council, Strategic Concept, paragraph 8.

<sup>13</sup> Yost, *NATO Transformed*, 7.

#### **4. The Greater Argument for Enlargement**

Although NATO places collective defense in the forefront of its strategic concept, today more of its actions seem to be focused on collective security than on collective defense. Furthermore, the greater argument for enlargement certainly is being framed in favor of collective security concerns. NATO's objectives for enlargement center on collective security purposes such as peace enforcement, peacekeeping, crisis management, economic sanctions as well as cooperative efforts and partnership-building activities.<sup>14</sup> NATO has consistently argued in favor of collective security issues when defending rationales for enlargement. A significant point that NATO makes is in the area of intra-Alliance dispute resolution, arguing that if the parties are members of the Alliance, there is a greater likelihood of successful resolution of inter-member disputes. NATO cites over fifty years of successful security cooperation between its members.

The main purpose of the Alliance is still centered on collective defense, yet the arguments for enlargement center on collective security. This leads us to the question of why the Alliance pursues this seemingly bifurcated approach. One glaringly obvious explanation is the idea that NATO is very sensitive to what the Russians may think about collective defense as an argument for enlargement. If NATO wants to enlarge to collectively defend against Russia, what does that make Russia? Collective defense begs the question of defending against whom. Skirting the issue of collective defense and emphasizing collective security and European stability is a much more profitable and defensible position for the Alliance and its members to take. In his testimony to Congress in April of 1997, former Secretary of Defense William Cohen argued for enlargement to transform the European security architecture. He identified several benefits, saying that enlargement would:

- Provide stability for the new democracies of Europe;
- Further a European integration committed to Western Values;
- Promote a multilateral (not a nationalistic) defense concept;
- Solidify democratic and economic reforms in a transatlantic institution; and

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<sup>14</sup> Ibid, 124.



- Associate new members in NATO's efforts, throughout Europe, and even beyond, to meet tomorrow's security challenges.<sup>15</sup>

This position by the United States clearly underscores its commitment to the collective security argument for enlargement. This downplays the necessity to discuss potential enemies or aggressors against whom the Alliance, and in this case the United States, would defend. If stability, democracy and economic integration are cited as the goals of this new security architecture for Europe, there is a much more positive and idealistic spin than using words like threat, enemy and aggressor.

Some critics argue that there should be more discussion about collective defense and the responsibilities of new members of the Alliance with regard to collective defense. The danger in justifying enlargement around collective security is not in the extra-Alliance parties' perceptions or opinions; rather, the danger lies in the expectations or lack thereof on the part of the new Alliance members. If the reason for joining NATO was to be a part of a new "European security regime" and perform peacekeeping and contingency missions, there is a significantly different expectation than collective defense and the potential of warfighting. This is analogous to recruiting soldiers to serve in an army with rhetoric about college savings accounts, foreign travel and training opportunities without addressing the core competencies of combat operations and defending one's country. Expectations are created based on what is said over and over, not necessarily what is contained in sub-paragraph thirty nine of paragraph eleven of part three of an agreement.

Collective security certainly plays a more prominent and popular role in the rationale for enlargement than collective defense. Whether this seems correct or fair is immaterial. The fact remains that the Alliance and its member states are much more comfortable using it as the primary justification for enlargement. This consideration alone is sufficient to make collective security the path of rationale for NATO enlargement.

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<sup>15</sup> Ibid. 125.

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## **B. RUSSIAN POLICY ON NATO ENLARGEMENT**

### **1. Russian Domestic Debate**

The domestic debate on NATO enlargement was not evident until NATO's decision in late 1994 to seek enlargement into Eastern Europe. Moreover, the domestic debate over NATO enlargement has been wholly centered on the political, academic and military elites of Russian society and not the general public. The Russian public, consumed with attempting to eke out its mere existence, was not concerned about realist or neo-realist international relations perspectives and national security issues. The elite generate the public's views of this debate through the popular press and mass media. This all changed after the 1999 NATO's involvement in the former Yugoslavia, culminating in the bombing of Kosovo. Russian public opinion was overwhelmingly opposed to NATO's action and NATO was easily demonized by Russian elites. Russian sentiment can be most accurately summed up by the following quote from Alexei Arbatov, a senior liberal member of the Russian Duma:

The massive air attacks on the Bosnian Serbs from the summer of 1995 demonstrated that force, not patient negotiations, remained the principal instrument of diplomacy and that Moscow's position was only taken into account so long as it did not contradict the line taken by the United States. In the eyes of the majority of Russians, the myth of the exclusively defensive nature of NATO was exploded.<sup>16</sup>

The domestic discourse about NATO enlargement is actually a part of a larger and more significant issue of where Russian foreign policy is headed and the question of how Russia views itself in the world. Central to this discussion are the topics of national security, relations with the "near abroad", military reform, and overall European security.<sup>17</sup> Amazingly, the debate about NATO appears to be one of the only points upon which there is unity in Russia, or at least within the Russian elites. With some minor exceptions such as the Democratic Choice of Russia and "Forward Russia!" Russian political, military and academic elites strongly oppose NATO enlargement.<sup>18</sup> Generally, the domestic view is that NATO expansion will destabilize the security balance of

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<sup>16</sup> Alexei Arbatov, in *Nezavisimaia Gazeta*, 14 March 1997.

<sup>17</sup> Alexander A. Sergounin, "Russian Domestic Debate on NATO Enlargement: From Phobia to Damage Limitation", *European Security*, Vol. 6, No. 4 (Winter 1997), 55.

<sup>18</sup> Ibid.

Europe. Prior to September 11, 2002 NATO enlargement had strengthened the hardliners in Russia and all but silenced the centrists and “Atlanticists” that had favored a westward-leaning Russia. Practically speaking, after late 1994 it was political suicide to support NATO enlargement in Russia. There is some very recent evidence of a lessening of Russian rhetoric on the issue of NATO enlargement in view of the post-September 11<sup>th</sup> environment. This will bear additional study, but at the time of this writing, this new phenomenon has not stabilized enough to suggest that Russian domestic discourse has fundamentally altered.

The following summary of Russian arguments against NATO enlargement were assembled by Russian Political Scientist Dr. Alexander A. Sergounin:

- NATO enlargement would destroy the existing “security buffer” between Russia and NATO and shift the strategic balance in favor of the West.
- It (enlargement) could bring a NATO military presence to the Russian borders, potentially including foreign military bases and nuclear weaponry.
- NATO extension could evoke a Russian military build-up on the western and northwestern borders to protect Kaliningrad, Novgorod, St. Petersburg and other vulnerable areas.
- It would strengthen a “war party inside Russia that could demand a stop to military reforms and re-militarize the country.”
- NATO enlargement could accelerate creation of a military alliance within the CIS that would resume confrontation in Europe on the military bloc basis.
- It would challenge Ukraine and Moldova’s status as neutral states.
- The Alliance’s extension could generate a new crisis for and even potential collapse of the Conventional Forces in Europe (CFE) Treaty.
- It would undermine the Organization for Security and Cooperation in Europe (OSCE) role as the main backbone of the European security system, etc.<sup>19</sup>

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<sup>19</sup> Ibid., 56

These eight points effectively summarize the collective Russian opposition to NATO expansion. The motivation for this line of thinking can best be explained by looking at the context in which these anti-NATO attitudes were developed. The parliamentary elections of 1995 and the presidential elections of 1996 generated rhetoric around the notion that Russia needed to protect its security interests and stand up to the West. These ideas, coupled with a general shift in foreign policy thinking towards a realist camp, led to the solidification of the view that NATO enlargement undermined Russian national security interests and was a real threat. This provided the impetus to unite the various elite factions against a common “enemy.” The distinction between collective defense and collective security has not made much of an impression on the Russian psyche and the main umbrage felt by Russia focuses on the collective defense issue of expansion. Here, the idea of a collective defense alliance expanding to the Russian border can only be seen by Russia as expanding toward that alliance’s perceived threat. If NATO sees Russia as a threat, then Russia must ask if NATO is not the same. If NATO were reorganized as a collective security organization under the auspices of the OSCE, Russian sensibilities and insecurities might be assuaged. Another area of concern is the obvious US leadership role in NATO and the Russian objection to US influence in Europe. So long as NATO is perceived by Russia as US dominated, this view will not change.

Essentially, the Russian domestic debate on NATO enlargement can be summed up by saying that so long as NATO is seen by Russia as a collective defense alliance defending against a potential threat, Russia will perceive itself as a distrusted enemy of NATO and feel threatened by NATO. This realist view of the balance of power in Europe may diminish with cooperation and engagement, wherein a Russia that is engaged and involved with Western security interests and endeavors as well as collective security initiatives is less likely to feel threatened.

## **2. Isolation vs. Inclusion**

Russia’s relationship with NATO may be viewed as a continuum that ranges from complete isolation on one side of the spectrum to full membership on the other. Isolation is defined for purposes of this thesis as the state in which Russia isolates itself from

NATO, refusing to cooperate in any way with the Alliance. This isolation would practically be a self-imposed action; the likely result of a gradual deterioration of the Russia-NATO relationship to the point where there was no dialogue or cooperation. NATO enlargement is arguably the greatest single factor in determining where Russia-NATO relations rest on this scale.

NATO has consistently rejected Russia's initial and continued cries for the dissolution of NATO or the subjugation of NATO to the OSCE. As a result of NATO's enlargement strategy and the subsequent negative reactions by Russia, NATO created the Partnership for Peace (PfP). PfP allowed interested east-central European (ECE) states to partner with NATO without becoming members. PfP created a diplomatic pause, allowing ECE states to move closer to the West and NATO, while placating Russia by not actually enlarging the Alliance. Russia sought PfP association and in June 1994 was granted a special Russia-NATO protocol, recognizing Russia's "unique and important contribution[...] as a major European, world and nuclear power."<sup>20</sup> Russia got some partial recognition as a major power and NATO got Russia's association with PfP. Russia thought that it would gain influence by this association; however, in reality, Russia received neither a veto over NATO affairs nor any special perquisites in the Alliance. Relations between Russia and NATO continued to be strained as enlargement continued to be a future strategy for the Alliance. Russia was still greatly concerned with NATO expansion and began to link it to Russian compliance to other issues, such as ratification of the START II Treaty.<sup>21</sup>

Although Russia was participating in PfP, its overall relations with NATO were strained. Looking at our continuum of NATO-Russia relations, Russia was again sliding back toward the isolation side. A new initiative, The Founding Act on Mutual Relations, Cooperation and Security was signed in Paris in May 1997. This agreement allowed for NATO to expand, with assurances to Russia that nuclear weapons would not be deployed to the new ECE member states, as well as no new conventional force deployments being foreseen. The Founding Act also established the NATO-Russia Permanent Joint Council

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<sup>20</sup> Caroline Kennedy-Pipe, "Russian and the North Atlantic Treaty Organization," in *Russia and Europe: Conflict or Cooperation?*, ed. Mark Webber, (Portland: St. Martin's Press, 2000), 53.

<sup>21</sup> Ibid., 56.

(PJC), the new primary consultation arm for Russia with NATO.<sup>22</sup> However, Russia was still powerless to veto NATO actions and decisions. This new arrangement still reflected diplomatic engagement while NATO pursued the tack of enlargement. Practically speaking, Russia had little choice but to allow NATO to expand. It lacked the military prowess to challenge NATO and diplomatically and economically Russia was reactive at best to Western initiatives and interests.

Russia, still fixated on the issue of enlargement, was turning up the rhetoric with regard to NATO. By the autumn of 1998 a new “cool war” had been characterized in the Russian press.<sup>23</sup> The continuum scale was tipping farther towards isolation, even with Russia’s participation in Stabilization Force in Bosnia-Herzegovina (SFOR), PfP and PJC. Further deterioration of the NATO-Russia relationship followed US overtures towards the Baltic states and Ukraine. Ukraine occupies a geo-strategic location and the issue of the Black Sea began to come to the forefront of Russia-NATO discourse. Ukraine decided to cooperate in a “in the spirit of PfP” (ISOPfP) NATO sponsored naval exercise called EXERCISE SEA BREEZE 97. This exercise was vehemently opposed to by the Russians and was one of the significant points of contention of the US-Ukraine military-to-military program. This was considered a very provocative move on the part of Ukraine, interpreted by Russia as an attempt on the part of Kiev to assert ownership over the Black Sea Fleet anchored in the Crimea. Furthering the enmity of Russia, as part of the SEA BREEZE 97 scenario, NATO enacted a simulated invasion of the Crimea to help quell a Crimean separatist uprising.

All of these actions on the part of NATO and the subsequent reactions by Russia can be characterized as actions matched with rhetorical reaction. Russia, despite its strong language and histrionics, has been essentially powerless to halt the enlargement of NATO. All of the actions taken by Russia during the Kosovo crisis in 1999 centered on Russia removing itself from engagement opportunities with NATO and isolating itself from the Alliance. Again, Russia lacks the political, diplomatic, military and economic power necessary to confront NATO directly. Nonetheless, Russia still has a great deal of umbrage over NATO enlargement. From a Russian perspective, the Alliance has treated

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<sup>22</sup> Ibid., 57.

<sup>23</sup> Ibid., 59.

Russia as a defeated and fifth-rate power. This animosity and angst, whether real or perceived, still slides the continuum further away from cooperation and inclusion towards isolation and confrontation.

### **3. Russian Military Strategy – Buffer Zone Doctrine**

NATO enlargement has a special meaning for Russians when it is viewed geographically. For NATO, enlarging eastward makes good sense in terms of stability and collective security. However, from a Russian perspective, the eastward expansion of NATO is, in pragmatic terms, the military encroachment of a fifty-year adversary. Russia's buffer zone is diminishing as NATO expands its military capability. Russia's former ECE allies have virtually all sought some association with NATO. Since the end of the Cold War, Russia has continually lost relative power and influence in Europe. This has been most obvious in Eastern Europe, a particularly difficult venue for Russia to appear powerless or weak. The buffer zone of Eastern Europe has historically been a major part of Russian and Soviet military strategy. This buffer zone was used as a basing area for forward defense. Historical lessons learned by Russia reinforced the necessity to trade space for time. This longstanding Russian imperative still haunts Russian military planners. When the issue of enlargement is examined from this Russian geo-strategic perspective, it is not difficult to understand Russia's angst.

Apart from the diplomatic and political concerns over spheres of influence, Russia has practical security concerns over the loss of a buffer zone. Russia has gone from having a three-fold advantage in conventional military forces over NATO to a three-fold inferiority to Western forces.<sup>24</sup> Its diminished military forces are economically strapped, giving rise to significant readiness concerns. This is traditionally a time when a larger buffer zone becomes more critical. Russia has historically relied upon the concept of being able to trade this space for time. This served Russia against Napoleon's France and Hitler's Germany. With the fall of the Soviet Union and the subsequent accession of ECE states into NATO, Russia's buffer zone has diminished by over 1,500 kilometers.<sup>25</sup> Although this may appear insignificant to Western diplomats, politicians and even some

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<sup>24</sup> Nadia Alenandrova Arbatova, "Russia and NATO: a Russian View," in *NATO After Kosovo*, (Breda, Netherlands: Royal Netherlands Military Academy, 2000), 47.

<sup>25</sup> Ibid.



academics, Russians view the loss of this security belt with great concern. When one views these facts in light of Russian public opinion after the NATO attacks in former Yugoslavia, it is not difficult to see why they view NATO as a potential adversary.

NATO has increased its military capability with a near three-fold advantage over Russia and moved 1,500 kilometers closer to the Russian borders. Russia cannot help but take these facts into account when examining NATO's intentions. Although NATO proposes cooperation, its actions appear, at least from the Russian perspective, suspect. If one remembers recent history, the Soviet Union had a three-fold military superiority over NATO and consistently preached its lack of aggressive intentions, yet very few Westerners believed Soviet rhetoric and instead called it propaganda. The West continued to plan for Soviet aggression, arguing quite effectively that the Soviet Union would not have such a military force unless it intended to use it. Russians, mindful of this recent history, are quick to point to the same concerns over NATO intentions. Excluding times of actual war, not since before Peter the Great has the Moscow military district been the forward edge of Russian defense.<sup>26</sup> This fact looms heavily on the Russian psyche and begs the question of how Russia could be convinced to move toward cooperation, even membership, with NATO when it feels less secure because of it.

## **C. NATO ENGAGEMENT PROGRAMS**

### **1. Partnership for Peace (PfP)**

NATO initiated PfP in early 1994 as an opportunity for potential NATO members to have a greater affiliation with the Alliance. Russia viewed PfP as the Alliance's postponement of enlargement and its subsequent association with PfP in June 1994 was intended as a cooperative step on the part of Russia. The significance of PfP is less about the specifics of Russia's Individual Partnership Program and more about how Russia views PfP and what PfP does vis-à-vis enlargement.

PfP provides the opportunity for a partner state to design an Individual Partnership Program (IPP) that enumerates the specific state's participation in PfP

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<sup>26</sup> Ibid.

activities. These activities center around military-to-military contacts in the form of exchanges, conferences, and exercises focusing on interoperability and cooperation. A partner state establishes an individual plan with NATO and then is invited to participate in a myriad of PfP activities. NATO sponsors several PfP and In the Spirit of PfP (ISO PfP) exercises annually. These exercises are designed around peacekeeping and civil-emergency operations scenarios and are designed to foster a cooperative environment in which partner states can learn the doctrine and interoperability regimens of NATO. Admittedly, Russian participation in PfP activities has been nominal at best.

The US Department of State describes PfP as providing a framework for enhanced political and military cooperation and for improving interoperability with NATO and its partners.<sup>27</sup> PfP is meant to continue to engage potential NATO members and keep them close to the Alliance and foster cooperation with an eye toward possible membership. This basic philosophy is problematic for Russia, since enlargement is the critical point of contention between it and the Alliance. Russia's special status in the Permanent Joint Council (PJC) protocol was meant to allow for a special consultation relationship between Russia and the Alliance. This special relationship, regardless of its current efficacy, exists as a result of the Alliance's attempts to provide a special recognition of Russia without allowing Russia veto power over NATO decision-making. The PJC allows for Russian consultation with NATO, but does not obligate Russia or NATO to consult. Since September 11<sup>th</sup>, the cooperation between Russia and NATO and more specifically, between Russian and the United States, has improved. There is more consultation and strategic interchange; however, the operational and tactical levels of military operations still lack true cooperative spirit. It will take time for the US-Russia military-to-military relationship to catch up to the post-September 11<sup>th</sup> realities.

PfP is a good framework for developing uniformity and integration of military forces, but it is much too narrowly focused to serve as the sole vehicle to establishing a full partnership agenda, especially for Russia. PfP provides opportunities for cooperative-minded states to engage with NATO and explore further development of

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<sup>27</sup> US Department of State Factbook [database on-line] (Washington, DC: 1997, accessed 26 May 2002) available from [http://www.state.gov/www/regions/eur/nato\\_fs-pfp.html](http://www.state.gov/www/regions/eur/nato_fs-pfp.html); Internet

their respective relationship. It is not an all-encompassing program to develop new members.

## **2. State Partnership Program**

The State Partnership Program (SPP) is an independent, non-NATO initiative administered by the National Guard Bureau within the US Department of Defense. This program was originally developed to enhance and support the US European Command (USEUCOM) and supplement PfP activities. The program matches a country with a state, such as Ukraine and California. The National Guard of that state has a habitual relationship with the armed forces of the partnered country. SPP has branched out beyond USEUCOM to all theaters. However, the most robust aspects of SPP still reside in and around the PfP environment.

SPP is an engagement program but is not designed to achieve membership in NATO or any other security regime. The primary focus of SPP is to develop ongoing military-to-military and non-military contact programs that foster cooperation. A major aspect of the program centers on the strengthening of civil-military relations and uses the expertise of the National Guard to this end.

Most of the former Soviet republics are members of SPP as are many former Warsaw Treaty Organization (WTO) states. Russia is not a member of SPP and there is no plan to incorporate Russia in SPP. There is a strong perception that Russia joining SPP would only exacerbate Russia's feelings of inferiority, not being on a par with the United States but rather only with one of its states. SPP does involve Russia indirectly, in that many of the states of the "near abroad" are participating in SPP events on an ongoing basis. Many of these states have Military Liaison Teams (MLT) working within their Ministries of Defense and staffed by active duty and National Guard personnel. These MLTs coordinate the various exchanges and visits as part of US engagement initiatives in support of PfP.

## **D. NATO-RUSSIA RELATIONSHIP CHALLENGES**

Since the fall of the Soviet Union and the rebirth of Russia, NATO has been an omnipresent factor in Russia's international relations. That fact is unlikely to change in

the near future. The challenges of this relationship between NATO and Russia center on Russia's desire to pursue its own national interests and NATO's desire to pursue its collective defense and collective security interests. So long as Russia sees NATO as an adversary and potential aggressor, it will lean more towards confrontation than cooperation with NATO. The relationship began with a "honeymoon" where Russia was leaning westward and hope was eternal. This quickly faded as Russia began to seek its own path and develop interests that were not coincidental to those of NATO and the West. NATO actions in the Balkans only exacerbated this divergence of interests and policy. NATO's decision to enlarge is interpreted by Russia as a political and military move eastward and an encroachment on its buffer zone. From a realist perspective, balancing power is the necessity to ensure peace. Therefore, Russia objects to NATO enlargement on the fundamental premise that this enlargement tips the balance away from Russia. It is difficult to expect Russia to view enlargement in a different light. However if Russia views global terrorism as a large common enemy, this may change its calculations on security. So what does this mean for the future of NATO-Russian relations?

The relationship between NATO and Russia is directly related to the amount of divergence in the two entities policy interests. Where it is in their collective interests to cooperate, there will likely be cooperation. The practical reality is that Russia can do little to prevent enlargement. It can, however, take advantage of situational opportunities to dissuade and postpone this enlargement. As the post September 11<sup>th</sup> environment takes shape, there is the potential for more symbiotic activities between Russia and the Alliance. The new trend centers on a collective defense against terrorism, and in this vein Russia and NATO have a common enemy. This creates the opportunity for cooperation. Russia has much to offer in terms of basing and support for the Central Asian area of operations and NATO and the United States recognize this. This may even create an environment where Russia may seek and be granted membership, as the Alliance takes on a new adversary and absorbs the old one. In summary, Russia and NATO will find more engagement and enlargement with the ever increasing global threat of terrorism. Russia's partial or even complete membership in NATO may be the benefit of the terrorists scourge.

### **III. US-UKRAINIAN MILITARY-TO-MILITARY RELATIONS**

#### **A. OVERVIEW OF US-UKRAINIAN BILATERAL RELATIONS**

The United States and Ukraine have enjoyed formal relations since the United States recognized Ukraine on December 25, 1991. The United States has underscored its commitment to Ukraine by providing over \$2 billion in direct assistance since 1991. Ukraine is seen as a key component of regional US policy in Europe, as is evidenced by a significant economic investment on the part of the United States. The bilateral relationship is one that can be characterized as increasing in both scope and affability from its beginning. The early US-Ukraine relationship focused on nuclear disarmament, transition to a market economy, and transition to democracy.<sup>28</sup> By 1996, the last nuclear weapon had been removed from Ukraine and the relationship between the two countries developed beyond the cooperative threat reduction environment to a more mature relationship focused on multiple levels of the political, military, economic and social components of Ukrainian society. Recently, the United States has objected to actions taken by Ukraine's President Leonid Kuchma and this, coupled with a slowing in the Ukrainian democratization process has strained the relationship. This is currently seen at the head of state level, but the working level of relations is still on a solid footing.

US policy towards Ukraine is based fundamentally on the idea that Ukraine is an independent nation and that its independence is critical to US interests. This policy was enumerated by the US Ambassador to Ukraine, Carlos Pascual, in a speech at Kyiv Mohyla University on April 11, 2002. Ambassador Pascual noted the importance of Ukraine pursuing its own interests to preserve its autonomy and not be perceived as a "political football" between Russia and the United States.<sup>29</sup> From a US perspective, Ukraine's independence is tied directly to its ability to sustain a market economy and operate in a democratic environment. Since its independence from the Soviet Union in 1991, Ukraine has attempted to integrate the various aspects of political and economic reform to make a full transition to a democratic, market-based system. Ukraine is not yet

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<sup>28</sup> US Department of State, Background Notes - Ukraine, Washington, D.C. May 2000.

<sup>29</sup> Carlos Pascual, US Ambassador to Ukraine, speech to Kyiv Mohyla University, Kyiv, Ukraine April 11, 2002.

a fully functioning democracy, and much of the assistance from the West has been targeted on major aspects of economic and political reform. Initially, Ukraine's internal domestic politics often worked at cross-purposes. Although this is often endemic in developed democracies, it proved problematic for Ukraine in its development. However, now, for the first time in its history, Ukraine's domestic dynamics are such that its President, Prime Minister, Foreign Minister, National Security and Defense Council and a majority of its national legislature, or Rada, are focused in the same direction with regard to foreign policy. The number one foreign policy priority of all of these entities of Ukrainian government is European and Euro-Atlantic integration.<sup>30</sup> This is evidenced by the Rada's recent support of many of President Kuchma's foreign policy initiatives, including military cooperation and integration with both the United States and NATO. An essential component to cooperation with the West was signified by the ratification by the Rada in March 2000 of the Status of Forces Agreement (SOFA) which recognizes the status of NATO PfP forces, including US military forces. This historic move by the Rada showed a commitment towards continued cooperation and integration with NATO forces. Furthermore, this domestic coalescence in Ukrainian foreign policy has given the relationship with the United States, as well as with European countries, a more stable foundation; disputes between Washington and Kiev might still arise, but they do not alter the basic commitment in either country to seek a cooperative relationship.

## **B. US-UKRAINIAN MILITARY-TO-MILITARY RELATIONS**

### **1. Objectives and Programs**

The US-Ukraine military-to-military relationship is a key component of the overall US-Ukraine bilateral relationship. Consequently, the objectives of the military-to-military relationship must be integral to the overall bilateral relationship. Perhaps it would now be appropriate to describe the nature in which US military relationships with foreign militaries are managed. The Secretary of Defense (SECDEF) assigns particular areas of the world to geographic Commanders in Chief (CINCs) in a unified command structure. These CINCs report to the SECDEF with an information and coordination channel to the Joint Chiefs of Staff (JCS). Overall, US strategic policy is developed by

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<sup>30</sup> Ibid.

the National Security Council in coordination with the various cabinet departments and agencies necessary. This policy is then further promulgated through the Department of Defense (DOD) and then through the JCS. Once the policy is directed at a particular geographic region, that respective CINC and his staff further develop and refine the policy to tailor it to their regional Area of Responsibility (AOR). This policy is then further refined with the individual country teams at the respective US embassy. The embassy, in concert with the CINC and his staff, coordinate the activities that support US policy objectives as they relate to that individual country's bilateral relationship with the United States.

US foreign policy is supported by a military strategy in the geographic area of responsibility that is integral to that policy and interdependent upon it. The greater goals of US policy in Ukraine, in developing a fully democratic state, with a strong market-based economy and friendly ties with the United States, is underscored in the US-Ukraine military-to-military relationship. The military relationship is centered on security cooperation and the development of security policy that supports US interests. This security cooperation is heightened by developing cooperative relationships at various levels within the two military establishments. Fostering ongoing military contacts and interoperability feeds into the strategic goals of cooperative partners working toward collective security goals and developing habitual relationships. In a developing democracy, establishing a military that is civilian controlled and interoperable with US or NATO forces helps ensure that the transition to democracy is not thwarted militarily.

Current US-Ukraine military-to-military programs are centered on two of the United States European Command (USEUCOM) strategic fundamentals of security cooperation and joint training and interoperability.<sup>31</sup> Security cooperation is the area of USEUCOM's strategic theater plan that encompasses what was previously referred to as engagement. Security cooperation is the operational and military application of policies that support security interests for the United States and its allies, friends and partners. The second strategic fundamental of USEUCOM, joint training and interoperability, speaks specifically to exercises and programs that involve direct joint or combined

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<sup>31</sup> General Joseph W. Ralston, USAF, Commander in Chief, US European Command, statement to the House Armed Services Committee, Washington, D.C., 20 March, 2002.

training opportunities with US and Ukrainian armed forces. Both of these fundamentals have been ongoing since the United States began its engagement strategy in the early 1990s.

Although many programs and activities are involved in the US-Ukraine relationship, this thesis will limit its scope to the activities centered on exercises under the Partnership for Peace (PfP), including In the Spirit of PfP (ISO PfP) and the State Partnership Program (SPP). These exercises all fall into the two strategic fundamental areas of security cooperation and joint training and interoperability. PfP, ISO PfP and SPP have all been explained in Chapter 2 of this thesis. Exercises, being events with a larger diplomatic, media and public interest, have been the events with which Russia has taken the greatest umbrage and therefore merit special attention.

## **2. Incidents of Russian Influence**

First, it should be said that Russian influence tactics designed to affect US-Ukrainian relations can be viewed in two ways; the influence tactics can be negative or positive. Negative influence can be characterized by Russian military officials objecting publicly to an exercise or deployment, or by some threat or use of sanctions or leverage, or by some form of disengagement or lessened cooperation. Positive influence can be characterized by Russian-Ukrainian military pacts or agreements, Russian-Ukrainian military-to-military contacts, joint exercises, joint defense projects, and economic or diplomatic cooperation initiatives. Russia has used both negative and positive influence techniques to affect the US-Ukrainian military-to-military relationship, but the cases studied in this thesis have been predominantly examples of negative influence on the part of Russia.

This thesis will study seven incidents of Russian influence. They are:

- SEABREEZE 1997, a US-Ukrainian exercise in the Black Sea with participation with other Black Sea bordering countries;
- SEABREEZE 1998, a NATO PfP exercise in the Black Sea;
- SEABREEZE 1999, a NATO PfP exercise in the Black Sea;



- COOPERATIVE PARTNER 2000, a NATO ISO PfP exercise in Ukraine;
- PEACESHIELD 1998, a NATO ISO PfP exercise in Ukraine;
- PEACESHIELD 1999, a NATO ISO PfP exercise in Ukraine; and
- PEACESHIELD 2000, a NATO ISO PfP exercise in Ukraine.

Before studying the SEABREEZE series of exercises, it is important to understand the background of the Black Sea Fleet dispute between Russian and Ukraine. The dispute began shortly after Ukraine gained its independence from the Soviet Union. In August 1992, the presidents of Russia and Ukraine agreed that the former Soviet Black Sea Fleet would remain under combined command of both countries for three years.<sup>32</sup> Then, in 1993, both presidents reached an agreement splitting the fleet in half equally. Russia's naval leaders balked at such an agreement and several other negotiations in 1994, 1995 and 1996 were attempted between the two countries. The acrimony and distrust associated with these negotiations affected the overall relationship between Russia and Ukraine. Ultimately, in May 1997, after much controversy and rancor, Russia and Ukraine reached an agreement for the disposition of the Black Sea Fleet. The fleet was split evenly, with Russia buying back several ships for cash, essentially giving Russia four-fifths of the fleet, and Ukraine leased several port facilities to Russia as well.<sup>33</sup> Although the agreement was honored by both countries, the relationship between the two countries was significantly strained. Of special note was the bitterness with which Russian Navy officers viewed the final outcome. This would lead to much consternation over future naval operations in the Black Sea.

The first studied exercise, SEABREEZE 1997, was originally planned as a NATO ISO PfP multi-national naval exercise. However, as the initial planning began, Russia objected. Ukraine then characterized it as a combined exercise between Ukraine and the United States with invited participants from Black Sea and other European navies.<sup>34</sup>

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<sup>32</sup> Federation of American Scientists [database on-line] (Washington, DC: 2000, accessed 30 October 2001) available from <http://www.fas.org/nuke/guide/russia/agency/mf-black.htm>

<sup>33</sup> Ibid.

<sup>34</sup> Sergei Ostanin, "Russia Not to Take Part in NATO Black Sea Exercises", *Itar-Tass News*, Moscow, Russia, 25 March 1997.

Russia still objected, and the Ukrainian Defense Minister, General of the Army Alexander Kuzmuk, traveled to Moscow to get an answer as to whether Russia would participate in the exercise. Russia then refused to participate, citing an “anti-Russian” undercurrent and a lack of “sufficient peacekeeping nature.”<sup>35</sup> Ukraine continued with the planning and ultimately went ahead with the exercise. The exercise was co-hosted by Ukraine and the United States and attended by nine other countries. SEABREEZE 1997 was the first outward example of Russian objections to Ukraine-US combined operations and training. Russia attempted to bully Ukraine into canceling this exercise, but Ukraine balked at this threat and stayed its course. Not only was this the first vivid example of Russia outwardly attempting to influence US-Ukraine military-to-military relations, it was also the first example of Ukraine standing firm against Russia in favor of its own course of action.<sup>36</sup> This signaled a change in Russian policy with regard to US-Ukrainian military-to-military relations.

SEABREEZE 1998 was conducted in the Black Sea region in the fall of 1998. This exercise expanded to include a major peacekeeping component, featuring marines on the ground. SEABREEZE 1998 was considered a NATO ISO PfP exercise, however Ukraine referred to it in terms of a US-Ukrainian sponsored multi-national exercise. This exercise focused on the development of coordination and cooperation skills in naval operations as well as coordinating peacekeeping operations developed around naval deployment of peacekeeping forces. Initially, Russia was non-committal on its participation and finally participated with staff officers in the exercise and a ship participating as well. Russia attempted to modify and control a significant portion of the exercise, but Ukraine was unwilling to cede control to Russia during the exercise.<sup>37</sup> Russia’s participation in SEABREEZE 1998 was most certainly an attempt on its part to exert control over the exercise and emerge as a leader in the region. The outcome, however, did not achieve any of Russia’s objectives.

SEABREEZE 1999 was a NATO ISO PfP exercise involving only computer-assisted simulations conducted in December 1999 at the Western Maritime District

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<sup>35</sup> Ibid.

<sup>36</sup> Shea, interview.

<sup>37</sup> Taran, interview.

Headquarters in Odessa, Ukraine. There were no actual naval forces participating in the exercise, merely staffs from the various naval services practicing coordination, command and control. US and Ukrainian military planners believed that a command-post type exercise might appear less inimical to Russia. The scenario involved peacekeeping operations coupled with humanitarian aid for a natural disaster. NATO was not used as the stated command organization under which the various naval staffs were controlled, but NATO-type command and control and staff procedures were practiced. Russia again objected to the exercise and did not participate nor did it provide observers to the exercise. Russia's objections were vague, citing no specific points of contention but objecting to the "nature" of the exercise.<sup>38</sup>

COOPERATIVE PARTNER 2000 was a NATO PfP exercise conducted in the Black Sea region in June 2000. This exercise was co-hosted by Ukraine and the United States, with nine other NATO countries and five PfP partner countries participating. The scenario centered around a peacekeeping operation as well as humanitarian assistance after a natural disaster, with naval forces performing various maneuvers and marines operating on land. Russia refused to participate in the exercise, and it did not send observers. Russia also vocalized its disdain over the exercise at Russian-Ukrainian military-to-military discussions with senior-level military leaders.<sup>39</sup>

PEACESHIELD 1998 was a NATO ISO PfP exercise held in the summer of 1998 at the Yavoriv Training Area in Western Ukraine near the city of L'viv. This was a multi-national computer-assisted command post exercise designed to train military staffs from the participating countries. The scenario was centered on a peacekeeping scenario reminiscent of the Bosnia crisis. Ukraine and the United States were co-hosts, with fourteen NATO member and partner countries participating. Russia did not participate in the exercise, however they did send an observer team. This was the first multi-national iteration of the PEACESHIELD series of exercises. PEACESHIELD 1995, 1996 and 1997 were bilateral exercises between the United States and Ukraine.

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<sup>38</sup> Ibid.

<sup>39</sup> Major General (Retired) Nicholas Krawciw, OSD, interview by author, written notes, Washington, DC, 25 September 2001.

PEACESHIELD 1999 was a NATO ISO PfP exercise held at the Yavoriv Training Area in the summer of 1999. The exercise was expanded to include a field training exercise coordinated with the computer-assisted command post component of the exercise. This integration was the first attempt in the US-Ukraine relationship at exercising live troops along with the staff exercise. Russia objected to the use of US and NATO troops in the exercise and refused to participate. Unlike the previous year, they also refused to send observers.

PEACESHIELD 2000 was a NATO ISO PfP exercise held at the Yavoriv Training Area in the summer of 2000. The exercise, as discussed earlier in this thesis was expanded to include a major airborne operation as a real part of the simulation. This expansion was a direct result of an improving and flourishing US-Ukrainian military-to-military relationship. PEACESHIELD was viewed as the cornerstone NATO PfP exercise. Additionally, Ukraine would cede control of its portion of the Polish-Ukrainian Peacekeeping Battalion to the NATO Supreme Allied Commander for deployment to the Balkans. With a focus on multinational cooperation and security cooperation, PEACESHIELD 2000 was the featured symbol of increased US-Ukrainian and NATO-Ukrainian cooperation. This was a major step forward in US-Ukraine military-to-military relations, involving detailed and lengthy planning and coordinated staff actions and cooperation. Russia's objections to PEACESHIELD 2000 were the strongest and most adamant to date. Senior Russian military officers threatened diminished relations between Russia and Ukraine as well as between Russia and the United States. Discussions between Russia and Ukraine over the airborne operation portion of the exercise took place several times over the intervening months and at the deputy defense minister and defense minister level.<sup>40</sup>

To recap the exercises studied, in the SEABREEZE series, Russia objected to the 1997 and 1999 exercises and it refused to participate in the exercises, also refusing to send observers. Russia participated in SEABREEZE 1998, but it attempted to change the nature of the exercise and tried to lessen the actual coordination and interoperability aspects of the exercise. It also attempted to change the command and control structure

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<sup>40</sup> Taran, interview.

during the exercise. In the COOPERATIVE PARTNER 2000 example, Russia chose to not participate, objecting strongly to NATO naval operations in the Black Sea. In the PEACESHIELD series, Russia did not object to the 1998 exercise, however they chose to send only observers rather than participate. The Russians boycotted both the 1999 and 2000 exercises, with 2000 involving the most vocal objections of any exercise studied.

SEABREEZE and COOPERATIVE PARTNER were naval oriented exercises. They involved navies from NATO member and partnership countries. These exercises represented the concept of NATO operations in the Black Sea, which in and of itself was a point of contention for Russia with Ukraine. In addition to the NATO question, Russia and Ukraine had an ongoing dispute over the final disposition of the former Soviet Black Sea Fleet. The negotiations between Russia and Ukraine were plagued by interference from Russian general officers who objected to Ukraine's claim of ships from the previous Soviet fleet as well as the claim of Sevastopol as Ukrainian territory.<sup>41</sup> These naval exercises represented some specific diplomatic and political points of contention for Russia and Ukraine and objections and boycotting of these exercises can be easily tied directly to the NATO and Black Sea Fleet issues.

The PEACESHIELD exercises are more difficult to tie directly to specific Russian, Ukrainian or US issues. However, these exercises do, perhaps, have a more indirect connection to existing issues. In the PEACESHIELD exercises, the exercises became more sophisticated and involved more countries with each iteration. Moreover, each year more interoperability and NATO standardization was undertaken. Another issue was the geographical significance of the exercise location. The Yavoriv Training Area is located in the western-most part of Ukraine, northwest of the city of L'viv. This is traditionally a very nationalistic region of Ukraine, with very little support for Russia and Russian interests compared to other regions of Ukraine, especially the Russian-leaning Crimea region along the Black Sea. The Yavoriv Training Area was being offered up by Ukraine as a NATO PfP peacekeeping training center. This would mean a significant influx of NATO funding for infrastructure development and operations and maintenance support money, both from NATO and the United States.

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<sup>41</sup>. *The Making of Foreign Policy in Russia and the New States of Eurasia*, eds. Adeed Dawisha and Karen Dawisha, (London: M.E. Sharpe, 1995), 31.

This chapter has summarized the evolution of US-Ukrainian relations, the military-to-military component of those relations and Russian reactions to that military-to-military relationship. The next chapter will analyze the Russian influence attempts.

## **IV. CASE ANALYSIS**

### **A. RUSSIAN MOTIVATIONS**

#### **1. Decreasing US/NATO Influence**

Before we examine the four motivation categories postulated by this thesis, we should take a moment to understand the deeper, underlying motivations for why Russia attempts to influence the US-Ukrainian military-to-military relationship. The author believes that Russia's primary motivation and orientation is defensive. From the Russian perspective, they have legitimate security concerns and their view of NATO enlargement is cautious at best. In order for Russia to be comfortable with NATO enlargement, there must be Russian inclusion. Without extraordinary assurances, however, there must be overriding security cooperation issues that bring Russia towards the West, rather than vice versa.

In the first category of motivation, Russia attempts to decrease US/NATO influence towards Ukraine. By decreasing US/NATO influence, Russia is in a position to exert more of its own influence and hence, advance its national interests. As an overarching motivation, Russia would object pro forma to almost any exercises that involve US or NATO forces, thus decreasing any potential influence that the United States and NATO might have on Ukraine. It is difficult for Russia to sustain a fundamental objection to US/NATO influence in Ukraine. Without practical examples and situational reference, international and domestic public opinion and political pressure are difficult to rally. However, military exercises are frequently highly visible platforms for diplomatic or political posturing. Russia sees its interests served by objecting to even the idea of US or NATO coordination and cooperation.

Decreasing US/NATO influence in Ukraine is evident as a motivation in all three exercise series studied in this thesis. In the SEABREEZE and COOPERATIVE PARTNER series of exercises, US and NATO member country warships operating in the Black Sea were glaring examples of influence from these countries towards Ukraine. Boycotting the exercises or attempting to alter them to meet Russian objectives are ways to try to counter Western influence. In the PEACESHIELD series, Russia objecting to

ground troop operations by US and NATO forces in Ukraine was clearly tied to attempting to diminish US and/or NATO influence. In the case of PEACESHIELD 2000, Russian general officers were hopeful that by applying vocal pressure to the exercise planning phase, US or Ukrainian planners would eliminate that portion of the exercise to gain more pluralistic participation from partner countries. Although this was not the actual result, it certainly speaks to Russian motivation.

## **2. Curbing NATO Enlargement**

Curbing NATO enlargement is a very fundamental and essential motivation to much of Russia's foreign policy. Much of the Russian elite see NATO enlargement as an expansion of the alliance's sphere of influence and not as a stability and security multiplier.<sup>42</sup> Hence, curtailing this enlargement is closely tied to the first category of decreasing US/NATO influence. Many Russian officials believe that NATO enlargement undermines Russian security interests. Therefore, curbing that enlargement would then strengthen Russian security interests. This is not at odds with the Alliance position, stated earlier in this thesis, that the primary justification for NATO enlargement is collective security and not collective defense. Collective security for NATO members is still not national security for Russia. By attempting to curb NATO enlargement, Russia may accomplish multiple objectives including the actual containment of NATO, the lessening of US/NATO influence in Ukraine or blocking the potential membership of Ukraine as a member state of NATO. This motivation is easily tied to all the exercise case study examples, since they all are directly or indirectly NATO sponsored or underwritten.

## **3. Increasing Russian Influence and Power**

Another motivation for Russian influence in the US-Ukraine military-to-military relationship is the actual increase of Russian influence and power. Russia has a long history of wielding large quantities of influence and power to serve its interests. It is illogical to assume that Russia has lost this collective political memory. From a realism perspective, Russia would see the increase of its relative power in the triangular relationship between itself, Ukraine and the United States as a very positive outcome.

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<sup>42</sup> Yost, *NATO Transformed*, 133.



Although the examples of Russian behavior vis-à-vis the case studies do not directly show an actual increase in Russia's relative power, it is very easy to view Russia being motivated in this way. By decreasing US/NATO influence it would be easy for Russia to view its relative power increasing in Ukraine, especially if Russians subscribe to "great power" influence ideas rather than norms that emphasize self-determination by sovereign states such as Ukraine. Analyzing the case study exercises, it is difficult to see any increase in Russia's relative power as a result of its objections and boycotts of these exercises. SEABREEZE 1998 provides a more vivid example of Russia attempting to increase its power and influence directly in the exercise. This would certainly point to Russian influence and power motivation. Russia's apparent self-isolation in the other studied exercises could easily be motivated by a desire to increase its own image as a powerful source of alternative military programs.

#### **4. Controlling Russia's Near Abroad**

Russia has viewed the republics of the former Soviet Union as its near abroad, giving special focus and attention to this region from a policy perspective. Russia has been particularly sensitive to European or American involvement in the near abroad and has taken great steps to develop distinctive policy in it as opposed to other areas of former Soviet influence. As previously discussed, Russian military doctrine has always considered the necessity of a large buffer zone between itself and Europe. Also, this loss of buffer zone has a practical effect on Russia, separate from the political influence issues of NATO or the United States. From the Russian perspective, this buffer zone is critical to its national security. Therefore, when NATO or the United States seeks to engage and operate inside what Russia characterizes as its near abroad, this is a special issue from the Russian perspective.

Although Russia sees Ukraine as part of Russia's near abroad, Ukraine views itself as a sovereign state. The Russian motivation to control its near abroad clearly involves itself in all of the studied exercises. As Ukraine invites NATO and US interests into its borders, Russia will continue to see this engagement as more encroachment into its near abroad. Much of the posturing and rhetoric that Russia puts forth on the issue of

NATO or US operations inside Ukraine can be directly related to this near abroad imperative.

The aforementioned motivations appear in rank order. The author believes that the most important motivation is Russia's desire to decrease US/NATO influence towards Ukraine. Again, by decreasing Western influence Russia stands to gain its own influence and advance its national interests. NATO military exercises serve as vivid examples of cooperation and coordination, hallmarks of influence for NATO and the United States. Playing into the Russian attempt to decrease Western influence towards Ukraine is Russia's desire to curb NATO enlargement. These two motivations dove-tail into limiting Western influence in Russia's near abroad and protecting its own interests. The third and far less measurable motivation is that of Russia increasing its influence and power over Ukraine. This motivation is evident, yet it serves mostly an historical perspective. Finally, Russia's attempt to control its near abroad is predominately historical. It seeks to maintain a buffer zone between itself and Europe, yet its success in this endeavor is meager. In summary, Russia is most motivated by its desire to decrease Western influence and thus increase its own, furthering its own national interests.

## **B. RESPONSE ANALYSIS**

### **1. Ukrainian Responses**

We will now look at the incidents as they have been presented chronologically and view the Ukrainian response to each incident of Russian influence. In SEABREEZE 1997 Russia objected to the NATO emphasis of the exercise; Ukraine responded by characterizing the exercise as a multi-national exercise co-hosted by Ukraine and the United States, with other countries invited to participate. This was an example of Ukraine attempting to assuage Russia's objections. Russia still objected but was vague as to its participation, prompting Defense Minister Kuzmuk of Ukraine to go to Moscow to get a definite answer. Russia declined to participate in the exercise. Ukraine's further response was to then continue with the planning and successful execution of the exercise. This could be considered the first real example of Ukrainian-Russian posturing over US/NATO exercises, and Ukraine established its policy of continued engagement with the West instead of capitulation to Russian objections.

In SEABREEZE 1998 a major peacekeeping component was added, calling for marines from various countries to operate on land in a peacekeeping role. Furthermore, Ukraine, learning from the previous year, characterized the exercise not as a NATO one, but, rather, as a multi-national cooperation and coordination exercise. Russia was initially noncommittal on its participation, then committed to participate. However, although it participated in the planning and execution, Russia did attempt to change the nature of the exercise and the command and control parameters. Russia attempted to modify the scenario and limit the interoperability and coordination aspects of the exercise. Russia took part in the execution of the exercise, but with an uncooperative and isolated attitude. Ukraine's response was to exert its own authority as the co-host and keep the nature and scope of the exercise within the NATO framework.

In SEABREEZE 1999 actual naval operations were omitted and the exercise was limited to computer-assisted simulations conducted in Odessa, Ukraine. The scenario was expanded to include peacekeeping operations and humanitarian assistance for a natural disaster. Ukraine modified the scope of the exercise in an attempt to attract Russia as well as assuage domestic concerns heightening over Ukrainian presidential elections. However, Russia declined to either participate in the exercise or send observers, citing no specific objections other than the "nature" of the exercise. Ukraine's response was to continue the planning and execution of the exercise without modification or apology. Ukraine further characterized SEABREEZE 1999 as a multi-national peacekeeping and humanitarian exercise under the command and control of a notional NATO-type organization.<sup>43</sup> Ukraine's response to the Russian boycott of SEABREEZE 1999 was to continue to engage with the United States and NATO. It should be mentioned that the exercise was held after the Ukrainian presidential elections were complete and President Kuchma was re-elected. This shows both a willingness to align with the West as well as sensitivity to the practicality of domestic politics.

In COOPERATIVE PARTNER 2000 Ukraine characterized the exercise as being part of the NATO PfP program. This naval exercise took place with actual naval and marine forces operating around a peacekeeping and humanitarian assistance to victims of

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<sup>43</sup> "Ukraine Hosts International Computerized Naval Exercises, SeaBreeze-99," *ITAR-Tass News (Moscow)*, 9 December 1999.

a natural disaster. Russia again objected to the exercise while conducting senior Ukrainian-Russian military-to-military discussions. Ukraine senior military officers merely took note of Russia's objections and continued to plan the exercise.<sup>44</sup> Russia declined to participate in the exercise, citing no real objections other than that the exercise existed, and refusing to send observers. Ukraine again noted the Russian response and continued on with the exercise, which was a huge success from the NATO perspective. Ukraine's response to Russia's boycott was not only to continue engagement with NATO and the United States but to expand the exercises in scope, explicitly linking itself to NATO.

In PEACESHIELD 1998 Russia declined to participate in the staff planning exercise, yet they did send observers. This was a basic command-post exercise with staff officers learning cooperation and coordination under the NATO model of command and staff procedures. Because Russia did not openly object to PEACESHIELD 1998, Ukraine's response was essentially moot. However, it should be said that Ukraine did continue to plan and develop this exercise under the umbrella of NATO, signaling a desire to continue to engage with the Alliance and specifically with the United States.

In PEACESHIELD 1999 Russia objected to the exercise and cited the use of NATO and US troops on the ground in Ukraine as its point of contention.<sup>45</sup> PEACESHIELD 1998 was a staff command post only exercise and no ground troops participated. PEACESHIELD 1999 was the first attempt at integrating the use of ground troops along with a computer-assisted exercise. Ukraine's response was to continue with the exercise planning and invite all NATO members and partners to participate. Russia continued to object to the exercise and refused to send observers. Ukraine planned and executed the exercise with twenty NATO member and partner countries participating. Ukraine's response was consistent with its continuing desire to engage NATO and the West. Ukraine essentially ignored Russia's boycott of the exercise.

PEACESHIELD 2000 was the most vivid and vocal example of Russia's objections. During the planning conference, attended by most of the invited countries,

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<sup>44</sup> Taran, interview.

<sup>45</sup> Shea, interview.

Russian general officers publicly opposed the inclusion of the airborne portion of the exercise. The Russian general leading their delegation decried the airborne operation as an incursion on “Soviet” territory. When confronted by the US delegation chief, the Russian general claimed that he was misunderstood, saying that he meant to say sovereign and confused the English word with Soviet. The author, present at this discussion, was inclined to believe that the Russian general used the word Soviet because of his otherwise strong reliance on a near abroad view of Ukraine and his paternalistic comments to the Ukrainian delegation. The Russian delegation was so upset over the continued discussion of a combined Ukrainian-US airborne jump that they physically removed themselves from the conference, leaving two days prior to the conference conclusion. Throughout the planning phase, Russia continued to object strongly to the airborne phase of the exercise. Russia even alluded to the possibility of tying other issues to the conflict over US-Ukrainian military-to-military activities, including trade and commerce issues involving energy credits.<sup>46</sup> Ultimately, they boycotted the exercise and did not send observers. Ukraine’s response was the most adamant to date. Ukrainian Defense Minister Kuzmuk stated at the opening ceremony of the exercise the significance of the airborne operation as a great example of the cooperation and interoperability of US and NATO forces. He further underscored Ukraine’s willingness to cooperate and engage the West by choosing to hand over command and control of the Ukrainian-Polish Peacekeeping Battalion (UKRPOLBAT) to NATO’s Supreme Allied Commander, Europe, General Joseph Ralston, USAF, at this same opening ceremony. Not only did Ukraine respond to Russian influence with strong rhetoric, they did not flinch when planning and executing all aspects of PEACESHIELD 2000.

In summary, the Ukrainian responses to Russian influence in the US-Ukrainian military-to-military relationship can be characterized in terms of a continuum. Initially, as Russia began to object to NATO/US exercises in Ukraine, Ukraine attempted to compromise and assuage Russian concerns. However, as the incidents became more prevalent and Ukraine continued to engage itself with the United States and NATO, Ukraine began to develop a more autonomous position from Russia. Ukraine’s responses are a variety of many international and domestic pressures and forces. However, the

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<sup>46</sup> Anonymous source, interview with author, written notes, Washington D.C., September 2001.

interesting phenomenon that was observed in this research was that Ukraine's responses continued to move out on the continuum toward autonomy and increased engagement with the West, rather than expand and contract or merely contract. This signals a desire on the part of Ukraine to engage with the West and continue its "distinctive relationship" with NATO formulated in July 1997 at Madrid, Spain. Moreover, Ukraine became more confident of its ability to be autonomous and trust the West of its own accord, rather than as a result of any particular provocation on the part of Russia. It should be said that Russia's influence strategy appears to have backfired. The more it used negative tactics, the more self-determined and nationalistic Ukraine became.

## **2. United States Responses**

Analysis of the US response to all of the exercises studied can be characterized collectively, noting some exceptions for individual exercises. Essentially, United States policy on engagement did not change during the four-year period covered by the exercises studied. When the Russians first objected to SEABREEZE 1997, the United States, through both USEUCOM and the Defense Attaché's Office in the US Embassy, Kiev, Ukraine, clearly communicated a position of quiet support for Ukraine.<sup>47</sup> Making it clear that Ukraine must decide its own path, the United States continued to engage Ukraine through multiple programs, including major NATO PfP and ISO PfP exercises. Once Ukraine had committed to co-hosting these exercises, US planning support was assured. US engagement policy supported a strategy of building upon each exercise, developing greater coordination and interoperability and increasing the intensity and scope of the scenarios to continue to challenge the participants. Moreover, the United States took the approach of addressing each Russian objection separately. This technique strengthened the image of the United States as an engaging partner, neither assuming Russian objection, nor validating its rhetoric. In taking this approach, the United States obviated Russia's ability to tie these exercises together and pin the United States down on a near abroad policy.

During the planning for PEACESHIELD 1999, the United States noted the potential of Russian rhetoric over NATO troop participation being exploited in the

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<sup>47</sup> Lieutenant Colonel Frank Morgese, USEUCOM Ukrainian Desk Officer, interview by author, written notes, 27 September 2001.

Ukrainian presidential campaign and offered to change the exercise dates. The issue was addressed at the defense minister level and the Ukrainians determined that the exercise, being held in nationalistic Western Ukraine, could be held without detriment to the domestic political process.

The overall response from the United States to Russian attempts to influence the US-Ukrainian military-to-military relationship can be summed up by the term quiet resolve. By staying the engagement course with Ukraine and treating it as a bilateral relationship, the United States maintained a credible engagement policy. US refusal to yield to Russian objections essentially established a standard that kept Russian efforts at bay, making them attempts at influence rather than influence in fact.

### **C. ANALYSIS OF IMPACT ON THE TRIANGULAR RELATIONSHIP**

#### **1. Analysis of Impact on US-Ukraine Relations**

The summation of the impact of Russian attempts at influencing the US-Ukrainian relationship is simple: Russia only enhanced and strengthened the US-Ukrainian military relationship by its efforts. Russian cooperation with NATO had already begun to decline by the time the first studied exercise, SEABREEZE 1997, was objected to by Russia. However, US-Ukrainian relations could be characterized as generally improving and maturing since the development of formal relations through the case study period in 2000. The US-Ukrainian military-to-military relationship was characterized as one of the most important in the theatre by General Wesley Clark, former NATO Supreme Allied Commander, Europe and CINC USEUCOM. According to General Clark, the engagement process allowed for open cooperation and discussion and facilitated and enhanced reform in Ukraine.<sup>48</sup>

Although the US-Ukrainian military-to-military relationship was challenged by these Russian attempts of influence, US-Ukrainian military-to-military relations are more robust today as a result. Russia's attempts to influence the United States and Ukraine provided a common bond for these new partners to build upon. This military-to-military relationship has enhanced the overall US-Ukrainian relationship. Although many

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<sup>48</sup> General Wesley Clark, address to California National Guard planning conference, November 1998.

challenges still exist at the higher political levels in this relationship of merely ten years, the military-to-military relationship is one area of continued improvement. One example of significant stability in the US-Ukraine relationship is the development of multi-tiered cooperation and communication in the military-to-military program. The program provides opportunities for cooperation and exchange of ideas from the defense minister/secretary level to the junior service-member level. The exercises studied were planned and conducted by serious professionals from both countries. Although the exercises may have had limited scope, their visibility and notoriety helped to strengthen the overall US-Ukrainian relationship.

## **2. Analysis of Impact on Russia-Ukraine Relations**

Russia's attempts at influencing the US-Ukrainian relationship have not improved Ukrainian attitudes towards Russia. They may also explain a decrease in the overall Russian-Ukrainian relationship. This is evidenced by decreasing numbers of exercises between Russia and Ukraine, decreased dependence on Russian weapons system maintenance and support, increased negative rhetoric from Ukrainian officials including senior military leaders, and an overall decline in the relationship.

Since 1997 Russia has applied more pressure and increased its objections to US-Ukrainian and NATO-Ukrainian cooperation. Ukraine, not wanting to be the rope in a tug-of-war between Russia and the West, has exerted its autonomy towards Russia. Russia has frequently characterized this autonomy as Ukraine merely aligning itself with the West, but Ukraine has been careful to point out its independent path. This has only exacerbated the difficulties between Russia and Ukraine. As Russia attempts to exert more influence, Ukraine exerts more independence.

## **3. Analysis of Impact on Russia-US Relations**

The US-Russian relationship has declined over the period of Russian attempts at influence. It is difficult, however, to determine whether the decline has been a result of Russian attempts at influence or whether it is a result of the policy divide that has resulted between the two countries. The US-Russian relationship can be viewed in terms of four phases. The first, or honeymoon phase, began with the recognition of Russia as an independent country by the United States in 1991. This period was marked by a gleeful



and almost utopian view of hope and cooperation. This period lasted until 1996, when US-Russian relations began to see major policy conflicts emerge. Russian security concerns over NATO enlargement and US influence as well as Russia's inability to control its economic destiny began to drive Russia to isolate itself from the West. This interim period, or cool-down, existed until 1998, coinciding with the deterioration of the Kosovo situation. Russia and the United States began to have significant disagreements over the US role in the NATO campaign in Kosovo. Russian policy began to become pervasive with anti-NATO, anti-US positions. This period lasted until the events of September 11, 2001. In the aftermath of this tragedy, US and Russian policy began to have more points of commonality. This fourth phase of the relationship is ongoing and shows strong signs of US-Russian cooperation.

These four phases illustrate the changes in Russian policy and attitudes towards NATO bilateral relationships. In the first phase of US-Russian relations, Russia participated in US/NATO engagement activities with vigor. They participated in exercises, exchanges, and various other programs with US and NATO forces. By 1997, Russia had begun to object to Russian participation in NATO activities in the near abroad. This policy shift was more evident as the overall relationship with the West began to seriously deteriorate over the Kosovo issue. By the time NATO had begun combat operations against the Serbs in Kosovo in 1999, Russian policy was juxtaposed with the West on nearly every issue. Russian domestic politics, driven by a strong passion and affinity for its Slavic brethren in Kosovo, played a key role in this policy shift. However, Russian officials, already nervous about security concerns over NATO's enlargement, easily manipulated Russian public opinion to strengthen an emerging anti-West, anti-US policy.

Certainly, US-Russian relations were strained by several factors, not merely the issue of NATO enlargement. Economic factors, including the US insistence that Russia accept the stark realities of its transition to a free-market economy only exacerbated the developing rift. Nonetheless, Russia's attempts to influence the US-Ukrainian relationship did not impact the US-Russian relationship as much as did the practical policy shift which Russia had undertaken. However, as Russia attempted to drive a wedge in the US-Ukrainian bilateral relationship, Russia only worsened its relations with

the United States. Again, it is important to point out that the US response Russia on its objections to US-Ukrainian engagement was to ignore Russian objections, citing Ukraine's sovereignty and autonomy. However, as Russia pulled away from NATO engagement exercises and isolated itself, the United States did not diminish its bilateral program with Ukraine, further aggravating Russia. The end result was Russia refusing to take part in NATO exercises in Ukraine up to the beginning of phase four (post September 11<sup>th</sup>) of US-Russian relations.

## **V. CONCLUSIONS AND RECOMMENDATIONS**

### **A. POLICY OUTCOMES**

#### **1. NATO Enlargement Policy**

Russian influence in NATO bilateral member-partner relations is inextricably tied to the issue of NATO enlargement. Russia's motives for attempting to influence the US-Ukrainian relationship are clearly tied to NATO's enlargement policy. So long as Russian officials continue to view NATO as an adversary or potential adversary, NATO will be challenged by Russia. In the US-Ukraine relationship Russia has an even greater issue because of Ukraine's near abroad status for Russia. As was discussed in Chapter Two, the security belt that Russia has historically maintained since Peter the Great is being challenged by NATO enlargement. When NATO plans and executes an exercise in Ukraine, this is a vivid and practical reminder to Russia that NATO is moving East.

In consonance with NATO, the United States has undertaken a two-prong engagement policy. The first aspect of engagement is to engage Ukraine in a bilateral military-to-military relationship. This clearly supports US national security policy by providing military-to-military contacts to further bolster the Ukrainian transition to democracy and supports Ukrainian military reform to that same end. The second part of the engagement policy is inherent in the Partnership for Peace program. The intent of PfP is to provide a conduit for potential members to have an ongoing relationship that leads to full membership. Moreover, with regard to the second prong of engagement, as the United States works through NATO in Ukraine, Russia perceives this as a logical progression leading to Ukraine's membership in NATO and the final penetration of its near abroad by the Alliance.

Russia's motivations stem from a primary, perhaps even primal, defensive posture. This is historical, cultural and practical. Russia has legitimate security concerns that are fed by the myriad of perceptions stemming from NATO enlargement. To achieve success, the West, primarily the United States, must modify its policy to emphasize security cooperation. Russia must be reassured that the Cold War is over and European security is truly collective and inclusive and NATO is the forum under which

this security cooperation must be achieved. It seems obvious that until Russia accepts NATO as a partner in security and does not view it as an adversary or competitor in its security interests, Russia will be opposed to NATO enlargement. Therefore, NATO must continue to pursue a special relationship with Russia that promotes a clear understanding of NATO's motives in its enlargement strategy. NATO must continue to present the rationale of collective security and an "all-Europe security" benefit from NATO enlargement. Furthermore, NATO must continue to pursue the idea of offering Russia full membership or at least a much more robust role in the Alliance. From a collective security perspective this makes complete sense, and it would certainly then ease Russian concerns over collective defense.

## **2. US-Russia Policy**

When viewed from the Russian perspective, the first prong of engagement increases US influence in Russia's near abroad. The United States, through its bilateral military contacts, is exporting its form of democratic civilian controlled military doctrine to Ukraine. The more cooperation and interoperability of equipment and systems that is practiced by the United States and Ukraine, the greater US influence is perceived by Russia. Russia's defensive nature and historical distrust of the West plays an important part in the America-Russian dynamic. The Russian perspective of a defensive orientation towards the West is expected, yet problematic. The United States must be sensitive to Russia's defensive posture and continue to engage Russia while simultaneously engaging Ukraine.

It can be argued that so long as the United States has interests in Central and Eastern Europe, Russia will be wary of these interests and the potential for increased US influence in the region. This is an issue that requires years of mutual understanding and trust on the part of both Russia and the United States. It is not something that can easily be assuaged through an agreement or even a series of agreements. This calls for increased engagement opportunities with Russia, including military-to-military contacts. The development of a more robust program with Russia seems possible, especially in light of the post-September 11<sup>th</sup> environment that exists between the United States and Russia.

Security cooperation and engagement is essential to an improving US-Russia relationship. The need for continued reassurance of end of the Cold War policies on the part of the United States cannot be understated. Acknowledgement of Russia's acceptance of this reassurance in the form of its cooperative attitude towards the ABM issue is an example of successful movement toward a more cooperative relationship. Cooperation with regard to worldwide terrorism and collective security issues centered on anti-terrorism and counter-terrorism is an essential component of improved US-Russia relations. The United States must take the lead in developing new security cooperation protocols and special relationship accords with Russia. These developments, coupled with open dialogue about ballistic missile defense and other post-Cold War issues, must be expanded and fleshed out. Of course, Russia must be more trusting of these reassurances and offerings. Russia's leadership must make some dynamic and fundamental changes as the world changes in the post-September 11<sup>th</sup> environment.

The United States must take the lead in creating a special relationship for Russia with NATO. The groundwork is currently available for such an undertaking. The emphasis of anti-terrorism as an underlying foundation to new security cooperation can be the conduit for change in the US-Russia relationship. Russian leadership is experiencing a change as well. President Putin must be encouraged to continue to pursue a more open relationship with the West. His rhetoric and even outspoken opposition to NATO and US activities in the Near Abroad is diminishing.

In summary, US-Russia relations must be re-built on collective security and even a form of collective defense against terrorism. Since Russia has historically viewed enlargement and US influence in the Near Abroad from a defensive posture, it must be convinced that it can move west and the West can move east in a collective and common effort to stem terrorism and other security threats. The United States, offering a new relationship with NATO and new military-to-military cooperation directly with Russia, will be essential to this new dynamic. Russia will follow the US lead and accept arrangements that help secure Russia's interests. Russia cannot possibly go the road alone; what they need is a face-saving opportunity to join with the West, while maintaining some pride and appearance of autonomy. Collective security cooperation

under the auspices of fighting world-wide terrorism is an ideal catalyst for this new cooperation.

## **B. RECOMMENDATIONS FOR US-UKRAINE MILITARY-TO-MILITARY PROGRAM**

### **Relationship Improvements and Bilateral Cooperation and Partnership Development**

The US-Ukraine military-to-military relationship can continue to improve in consonance with the aforementioned recommended policy adjustments towards Russia. By focusing the military-to-military relationship on collective security and anti-terrorism activities, the programs can give Russia an opportunity to see that US policy toward Ukraine and Russia is similarly based on collective security concerns and not on developing a collective defensive posture within Russia's near abroad. The development of exercises and collective training opportunities with Ukraine, involving Russia when and where appropriate, will enhance the overall status of the US-Ukraine relationship.

Specific improvements can be made in the area of security cooperation and anti-terrorism exercises, as well as the areas of counterdrug operations and border security operations. By focusing on security cooperation, the United States will focus Russian concerns away from collective defensive postures by the United States and NATO and towards collective security concerns for meeting twenty-first century threats. Another area of increased cooperation should be the State Partnership Program. Here, the California National Guard, working with Ukrainian forces across the spectrum from Ministry of Defense to Ministry of Emergencies and Border Guards, can focus on issues affecting the collective security of the United States and Ukraine, as well as the collective security of Russia as it relates to the US-Ukrainian activities. The State Partnership Program can also involve a greater number of corollary aspects of US and Ukrainian societies, focusing on civil-military operations and the relationship of military support to civil authorities. This will expose Ukrainian military and security forces to a very integrated civil-military cooperative process and underscore the concept of civilian control of the military. This will ultimately enhance the democratization of Ukraine and may even have some ancillary effect on Russia as well.

The benefit of the use of the State Partnership Program will be a non-threatening process of security cooperation and assistance that should be viewed by Russia as a cooperative process. The use of the National Guard has proven to be far less threatening towards Russia than with the use of active component troops. Also, the dynamic of citizen soldiers operating inside Ukraine fosters civil-military cooperation and further develops special relationships. These citizen soldiers relate to their Ukrainian civilian counterparts, teacher to teacher, farmer to farmer, policeman to policeman. This bilateral engagement with the United States and Ukraine should foster greater understanding and cooperation between the two and should be reasonably viewed by Russia for what it is, security cooperation, not collective defense alignment.

The evidence of this thesis is that Russia is predominately motivated by a defensive orientation. Russia, when it focuses on its legitimate security concerns, will see a benefit in security cooperation with the West, specifically the United States. This new US approach, focusing on collective security and security cooperation with Ukraine and Russia, will foster greater cooperation with both. Moreover, with the increased emphasis on anti-terrorism as a key component of this new relationship, Russia's motivation for influence and interference in US-Ukrainian relations should decrease. The more that US cooperation is tied to collective security and less to collective defense, the more Russia will respond to reassurance and engagement. This policy modification fits policy goals for all parties and should be viewed as a win-win strategy for the twenty-first century.

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